



NEWS RELEASE

OFFICE OF THE UNITED STATES ATTORNEY
WESTERN DISTRICT OF MISSOURI

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

FIFTH CLINTON, MO., RESIDENT PLEADS GUILTY TO ROLE IN CONSPIRACY TO MANUFACTURE METH

KANSAS CITY, Mo. – Todd P. Graves, United States Attorney for the Western District of Missouri, announced that a Clinton, Mo., man pleaded guilty in federal court today to his role in a conspiracy to manufacture methamphetamine.

Joel A. Harmon, 40, of Clinton, was pleaded guilty before U.S. Chief Magistrate Judge John T. Maughmer this afternoon.

By pleading guilty, **Harmon** admitted that he conspired with others to manufacture 50 grams or more of methamphetamine between Sept. 1, 2000, and April 7, 2004, in Henry County, Mo.

Under federal statutes, Graves explained, **Harmon** may be subject to a mandatory minimum sentence of five years in federal prison without parole, up to 40 years in federal prison without parole, plus a fine up to \$2 million.

Harmon is the fifth co-defendant to plead guilty in this case. Four others also have pleaded guilty and were sentenced for their role in the conspiracy on Jan. 12, 2005.

James D. Rush, 42, and **Larry D. Smith**, 35, both of Clinton, were each sentenced to 10 years in federal prison without parole for participating in the conspiracy. Rush and Smith both pleaded guilty to their role in the conspiracy on Sept. 7, 2004.

Max R. Hetherington, 42, also of Clinton, was sentenced to five years in federal prison without parole. **Michelle R. Grier**, 37, also of Clinton was sentenced to nine months in federal prison without parole. **Hetherington** and **Grier** pleaded guilty to their role in the conspiracy on Sept. 17, 2004.

The case is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Bruce Rhoades. It was investigated by the Henry County, Mo., Sheriff's Office and the Missouri State Highway Patrol.

This news release, as well as additional information about the office of the United States Attorney for the Western District of Missouri, is available on-line at
www.usdoj.gov/usao/mow